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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, February 9, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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February 9, 1951

Dear John:

Grandma advises you against making too many snowballs. We are enjoying, you see, our first real snow and although grandma hasn't been making snowballs, I'm sure she'd like to. The snow plow had to scrape the drifts out of our lane yesterday and your father did a backward flip (in the Buick) where Philadelphia Avenue crosses the New Holland Road when he came home last night. He was going to take me to see "All about Eve" but decided, after that, that he couldn't bear the squealing.

Reading has had (at least) two dismal misadventures this week. One of them involved a bunch of little boys who promised a quarter to the two little darkies who would go out to the middle of the pond to get it. Just as the darkies reached the quarter (on very thin ice) someone threw a brick and the ice broke. There was an heroic dog on the scene but the darkies were too heavy and none of the others present were heroic. So the darkies will be buried as soon as their friends can collect enough money to appease the undertaker. How's that for unrelieved tragedy? The other story has a spicy sprinkling of the mysterious. A young woman in fur coat and silk briefs (not another stitch the gossips say) was riding down the Morgantown road the other morning about two with her husband who says she was driving. At the iron bridge the car dove into the Angelica dam and stayed there until daylight when someone spied it on his way to work. The husband is in the hospital with serious injuries and she has been buried. But how could he, injured, crawl from the water or survive four or so hours of winter weather? And why were they on the Morgantown road at that hour when their home was on North Front Street in Reading? I know it is hard to stay away from Plowville. But did you know that people are jumping into their cars at all hours (and nude) to come our way? Better be home at twelve hereafter, boys.

I was reading One Red Rose Forever last night in order to bolster my self confidence. Unfortunately, it didn't work that way. Miss Jordan has a fearless attitude toward her character's sexual behaviour that leaves me awed and reverent. Well. it's going to be interesting to see if a sexless novel by a sexless woman about a sexless man will ever get into print. And I am having more fun than I've had at any time since you were learning to walk. When you and Kit get around to writing your first novels, I do hope you will have half the fun I'm having right now. And if no one ever reads it, it will have been time well spent.

Mother